

THE TIMES' DAILY SERIAL STORY.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

By
ROBERT AMES BENNETT

CHAPTER XX—(Continued.)

GAIN came, the gasping rattle, and this time there was no rattle. "Back around the tree," he said, harshly.

"What are you going to do?" "That's my business," he replied. He thrust his magnifying glass into her hand. "Here—go and build a fire, if you can find any dry sticks."

"You're not going to bury him?" "Whatever he may have been, he's dead now, poor devil. Go away now. It's no sight for you."

She did not move, but stood staring at the dead body with the horror of that sight.

"I can't see," she half-whispered, "not until you tell me what it is. You can't see it just what it is?"

Blake thought a little, and then tapped the top of his head. "Near as I can say, it's something of the brain-up there."

"You think that?" she hesitated. "That he had it?"

Again Blake paused to consider. "Well, I'm not a doctor, but I think him a pretty good fellow. He was playing on us—British dude. Fooked me and I'd been chumming with him for weeks."

"And Jimmie was the straight goods, fresh-imposed. No, this little Hawkins, if it's his name, had brains all right. Still, he may be a little bit off."

When folks go dotty, they sometimes get extra extra. The best I can think of him is that he was a little bit off. He had made him slip a coil, and then the scare over the war landed here and his spells of dizziness probably hurried up the softening."

"One thing more—I must know now: Do you remember the day when you set the dynamite and you were quarreled with him?"

Blake reddened and dropped his gaze. "Did he go and tell you that?"

"Would you care to tell me what you meant when you said that?"

"No, I'm not going to repeat any dead man's talk; and as for what I said, this isn't the time or place to say anything in that line—now that we're alone, understand?"

"I'm afraid I do not, Mr. Blake. Please explain."

"Don't ask me, Miss Jenny. I can't tell you now. You'll have to wait till we get aboard ship, with the tree steamer before long. Then every one of those that goes ashore in these boats."

"Why did you build that door?" Did you suspect? She glanced down at the huddled form between them.

Blake frowned and then burst out almost angrily. "Well, you know he was a sneak, so it's not blaming to tell that much. I knew he was before, and it's never safe to trust a sneak."

"Thank you," she said, and she turned away quietly, that she might not again look at the prostrate figure.

CHAPTER XXI
Team Work.

ALL the wood in the cleft was sodden from the fierce down-pour that had accompanied the cyclone; all the cleft bottom other than the bare ledge was a bed of mud; everything within the cleft had been either blown away or heaped with broken boughs and mud-strewn rubbish.

But the girl had far too much to think about to feel any concern over things. It was rather a relief to find something that called for work.

Not being able to find any dry fuel, she gathered up the sticks of the least sodden of the twigs and branches and spread them out on a ledge in the clear sunshine. While her firewood was drying, she scraped away the mud from her heated upon her rude hearth.

She began a search for lost articles. When she dug under the tree, she found her favorite steel pot, and one of the platters in fragments. The drying-frames for the meat had been blown away, and so had the little stove and hyena skins.

Catching sight of a bit of white down among the twigs, she picked it up and was not a little surprised to find the dried remains of her duck skirt. It had evidently been torn from the signal staff by the wind, and she had been down into the cleft by some flow or eddy in the wind, and wadded so tightly into the folds of the skirt that it had failed to dislodge it. Its recovery seemed to the girl a special providence, for of course she must keep up a signal on the cliff.

Having started her fire and set on a pot of water, she went on to the cave and began mending the slit in the torn flag. While she worked, she sat on a shaded ledge with her back to the sun and her feet warm and dry.

When Blake looked up and saw her, he was still where she had first put them, but the little pink feet were safely tucked beneath the tattered flag. Fortunately, the night of the cyclone had not worn Blake from noticing the moccasins.

"Hello," he exclaimed. "What's that—the flag?—the flag?"

"The flag," he explained. "Old St. Paul's carried clean away."

"Mr. Blake—just a moment, please. What have you done with the flag?"

Blake jerked his thumb upward. "You have carried him up on the cliff."

"Best place I could think of. No animals—and I piled some stones over. But I say, look here."

He drew out a piece of wadded cloth marked off into little squares by crossing lines of stitches. One of the squares near the edge had been ripped open. Blake thrust in his finger and worked out an emerald the size of a large pea.

"O-h-o-h," cried Miss Lake, as she held the glittering gem out to her in her right palm.

He drew it back and carefully thrust it again into the pocket.

"That's one," he said. "There's another in every square of this innocent, harmless rag—dozens of them. He must have made a clean sweep of the duke's—or, more like, the duchess's jewelry. Now, if you please, I want you to see this up tight."

"I cannot—I cannot touch it," she cried.

"Say, I didn't mean to. It was confounded stupid of me," mumbled Blake. "Don't you excuse me?"

"Of course. It was windy; the—the thought that—"

"No wonder. I always am a fool when it comes to ladies. I'll fix this thing all right."

Blake picked up the nearest small pot, he crammed the quilted cloth down within it and piled it to the brim with sticks.

"There! Guess nobody's going to run off with a jug of mud—and it won't hurt the stones if he gets a chance to look up the owner. He won't be hard to find—English duke minus a pint of first-class sparklers. Will you mind its setting in the cave after things are fixed?"

"No, not as it is. All right, then, now I'll go for the new flagstaff. You might set out breakfast."

She noticed in turn, and when he came back from the laundries with the largest of the great canes on his shoulder, his breakfast was waiting for him on a silver tray, and turned to go again to her sewing.

"Hold on," he said. "This won't do. You've got to eat your share."

"I do not—I am not hungry." "That's no matter. Here!"

He forced upon her a bowl of hot broth, and she drank it down, and she could not resist his rough kindness.

"Good! Now a chunk of meat," he said. "Please, Mr. Blake," she protested.

"She took a bite and sought to eat, but there was such a lump in her throat that she could not swallow. The tears gushed into her eyes and she began to weep.

"Blake's close-set lips related and he said: 'That's it; let it run out. You're overwrought. There's nothing like a good cry to ease off a woman's nerves—and I guess that's much different from women when it comes to such things.'"

"I—I want to get the flag mended," she sobbed.

"All right, all right; plenty of time," he said, looking down at her. "You're looking down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff. You're looking down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff."

He belted down the last of his meat, and as once left her alone to cry herself to sleep, he turned away from the cliff to the signal.

His first concern was for the barricade. As he had feared, he found that the beach was a mass of mud and debris. He looked down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff.

He gathered up the sticks of the least sodden of the twigs and branches and spread them out on a ledge in the clear sunshine. While her firewood was drying, she scraped away the mud from her heated upon her rude hearth.

She began a search for lost articles. When she dug under the tree, she found her favorite steel pot, and one of the platters in fragments. The drying-frames for the meat had been blown away, and so had the little stove and hyena skins.

Catching sight of a bit of white down among the twigs, she picked it up and was not a little surprised to find the dried remains of her duck skirt. It had evidently been torn from the signal staff by the wind, and she had been down into the cleft by some flow or eddy in the wind, and wadded so tightly into the folds of the skirt that it had failed to dislodge it. Its recovery seemed to the girl a special providence, for of course she must keep up a signal on the cliff.

Having started her fire and set on a pot of water, she went on to the cave and began mending the slit in the torn flag. While she worked, she sat on a shaded ledge with her back to the sun and her feet warm and dry.

When Blake looked up and saw her, he was still where she had first put them, but the little pink feet were safely tucked beneath the tattered flag. Fortunately, the night of the cyclone had not worn Blake from noticing the moccasins.

"Hello," he exclaimed. "What's that—the flag?—the flag?"

"The flag," he explained. "Old St. Paul's carried clean away."

"Mr. Blake—just a moment, please. What have you done with the flag?"

Blake jerked his thumb upward. "You have carried him up on the cliff."

"Best place I could think of. No animals—and I piled some stones over. But I say, look here."

He drew out a piece of wadded cloth marked off into little squares by crossing lines of stitches. One of the squares near the edge had been ripped open. Blake thrust in his finger and worked out an emerald the size of a large pea.

"O-h-o-h," cried Miss Lake, as she held the glittering gem out to her in her right palm.

He drew it back and carefully thrust it again into the pocket.

"That's one," he said. "There's another in every square of this innocent, harmless rag—dozens of them. He must have made a clean sweep of the duke's—or, more like, the duchess's jewelry. Now, if you please, I want you to see this up tight."

"I cannot—I cannot touch it," she cried.

"Say, I didn't mean to. It was confounded stupid of me," mumbled Blake. "Don't you excuse me?"

"Of course. It was windy; the—the thought that—"

"No wonder. I always am a fool when it comes to ladies. I'll fix this thing all right."

Blake picked up the nearest small pot, he crammed the quilted cloth down within it and piled it to the brim with sticks.

"There! Guess nobody's going to run off with a jug of mud—and it won't hurt the stones if he gets a chance to look up the owner. He won't be hard to find—English duke minus a pint of first-class sparklers. Will you mind its setting in the cave after things are fixed?"

"No, not as it is. All right, then, now I'll go for the new flagstaff. You might set out breakfast."

She noticed in turn, and when he came back from the laundries with the largest of the great canes on his shoulder, his breakfast was waiting for him on a silver tray, and turned to go again to her sewing.

"Hold on," he said. "This won't do. You've got to eat your share."

"I do not—I am not hungry." "That's no matter. Here!"

He forced upon her a bowl of hot broth, and she drank it down, and she could not resist his rough kindness.

"Good! Now a chunk of meat," he said. "Please, Mr. Blake," she protested.

"She took a bite and sought to eat, but there was such a lump in her throat that she could not swallow. The tears gushed into her eyes and she began to weep.

"Blake's close-set lips related and he said: 'That's it; let it run out. You're overwrought. There's nothing like a good cry to ease off a woman's nerves—and I guess that's much different from women when it comes to such things.'"

"I—I want to get the flag mended," she sobbed.

"All right, all right; plenty of time," he said, looking down at her. "You're looking down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff. You're looking down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff."

He belted down the last of his meat, and as once left her alone to cry herself to sleep, he turned away from the cliff to the signal.

His first concern was for the barricade. As he had feared, he found that the beach was a mass of mud and debris. He looked down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff.

He gathered up the sticks of the least sodden of the twigs and branches and spread them out on a ledge in the clear sunshine. While her firewood was drying, she scraped away the mud from her heated upon her rude hearth.

She began a search for lost articles. When she dug under the tree, she found her favorite steel pot, and one of the platters in fragments. The drying-frames for the meat had been blown away, and so had the little stove and hyena skins.

Catching sight of a bit of white down among the twigs, she picked it up and was not a little surprised to find the dried remains of her duck skirt. It had evidently been torn from the signal staff by the wind, and she had been down into the cleft by some flow or eddy in the wind, and wadded so tightly into the folds of the skirt that it had failed to dislodge it. Its recovery seemed to the girl a special providence, for of course she must keep up a signal on the cliff.

Having started her fire and set on a pot of water, she went on to the cave and began mending the slit in the torn flag. While she worked, she sat on a shaded ledge with her back to the sun and her feet warm and dry.

When Blake looked up and saw her, he was still where she had first put them, but the little pink feet were safely tucked beneath the tattered flag. Fortunately, the night of the cyclone had not worn Blake from noticing the moccasins.

"Hello," he exclaimed. "What's that—the flag?—the flag?"

"The flag," he explained. "Old St. Paul's carried clean away."

"Mr. Blake—just a moment, please. What have you done with the flag?"

Blake jerked his thumb upward. "You have carried him up on the cliff."

"Best place I could think of. No animals—and I piled some stones over. But I say, look here."

He drew out a piece of wadded cloth marked off into little squares by crossing lines of stitches. One of the squares near the edge had been ripped open. Blake thrust in his finger and worked out an emerald the size of a large pea.

"O-h-o-h," cried Miss Lake, as she held the glittering gem out to her in her right palm.

He drew it back and carefully thrust it again into the pocket.

"That's one," he said. "There's another in every square of this innocent, harmless rag—dozens of them. He must have made a clean sweep of the duke's—or, more like, the duchess's jewelry. Now, if you please, I want you to see this up tight."

"I cannot—I cannot touch it," she cried.

"Say, I didn't mean to. It was confounded stupid of me," mumbled Blake. "Don't you excuse me?"

"Of course. It was windy; the—the thought that—"

"No wonder. I always am a fool when it comes to ladies. I'll fix this thing all right."

Blake picked up the nearest small pot, he crammed the quilted cloth down within it and piled it to the brim with sticks.

"There! Guess nobody's going to run off with a jug of mud—and it won't hurt the stones if he gets a chance to look up the owner. He won't be hard to find—English duke minus a pint of first-class sparklers. Will you mind its setting in the cave after things are fixed?"

"No, not as it is. All right, then, now I'll go for the new flagstaff. You might set out breakfast."

She noticed in turn, and when he came back from the laundries with the largest of the great canes on his shoulder, his breakfast was waiting for him on a silver tray, and turned to go again to her sewing.

"Hold on," he said. "This won't do. You've got to eat your share."

"I do not—I am not hungry." "That's no matter. Here!"

He forced upon her a bowl of hot broth, and she drank it down, and she could not resist his rough kindness.

"Good! Now a chunk of meat," he said. "Please, Mr. Blake," she protested.

"She took a bite and sought to eat, but there was such a lump in her throat that she could not swallow. The tears gushed into her eyes and she began to weep.

"Blake's close-set lips related and he said: 'That's it; let it run out. You're overwrought. There's nothing like a good cry to ease off a woman's nerves—and I guess that's much different from women when it comes to such things.'"

"I—I want to get the flag mended," she sobbed.

"All right, all right; plenty of time," he said, looking down at her. "You're looking down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff. You're looking down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff."

He belted down the last of his meat, and as once left her alone to cry herself to sleep, he turned away from the cliff to the signal.

His first concern was for the barricade. As he had feared, he found that the beach was a mass of mud and debris. He looked down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff.

He gathered up the sticks of the least sodden of the twigs and branches and spread them out on a ledge in the clear sunshine. While her firewood was drying, she scraped away the mud from her heated upon her rude hearth.

She began a search for lost articles. When she dug under the tree, she found her favorite steel pot, and one of the platters in fragments. The drying-frames for the meat had been blown away, and so had the little stove and hyena skins.

Catching sight of a bit of white down among the twigs, she picked it up and was not a little surprised to find the dried remains of her duck skirt. It had evidently been torn from the signal staff by the wind, and she had been down into the cleft by some flow or eddy in the wind, and wadded so tightly into the folds of the skirt that it had failed to dislodge it. Its recovery seemed to the girl a special providence, for of course she must keep up a signal on the cliff.

Having started her fire and set on a pot of water, she went on to the cave and began mending the slit in the torn flag. While she worked, she sat on a shaded ledge with her back to the sun and her feet warm and dry.

When Blake looked up and saw her, he was still where she had first put them, but the little pink feet were safely tucked beneath the tattered flag. Fortunately, the night of the cyclone had not worn Blake from noticing the moccasins.

"Hello," he exclaimed. "What's that—the flag?—the flag?"

"The flag," he explained. "Old St. Paul's carried clean away."

"Mr. Blake—just a moment, please. What have you done with the flag?"

Blake jerked his thumb upward. "You have carried him up on the cliff."

"Best place I could think of. No animals—and I piled some stones over. But I say, look here."

He drew out a piece of wadded cloth marked off into little squares by crossing lines of stitches. One of the squares near the edge had been ripped open. Blake thrust in his finger and worked out an emerald the size of a large pea.

"O-h-o-h," cried Miss Lake, as she held the glittering gem out to her in her right palm.

He drew it back and carefully thrust it again into the pocket.

"That's one," he said. "There's another in every square of this innocent, harmless rag—dozens of them. He must have made a clean sweep of the duke's—or, more like, the duchess's jewelry. Now, if you please, I want you to see this up tight."

"I cannot—I cannot touch it," she cried.

"Say, I didn't mean to. It was confounded stupid of me," mumbled Blake. "Don't you excuse me?"

"Of course. It was windy; the—the thought that—"

"No wonder. I always am a fool when it comes to ladies. I'll fix this thing all right."

Blake picked up the nearest small pot, he crammed the quilted cloth down within it and piled it to the brim with sticks.

"There! Guess nobody's going to run off with a jug of mud—and it won't hurt the stones if he gets a chance to look up the owner. He won't be hard to find—English duke minus a pint of first-class sparklers. Will you mind its setting in the cave after things are fixed?"

"No, not as it is. All right, then, now I'll go for the new flagstaff. You might set out breakfast."

She noticed in turn, and when he came back from the laundries with the largest of the great canes on his shoulder, his breakfast was waiting for him on a silver tray, and turned to go again to her sewing.

"Hold on," he said. "This won't do. You've got to eat your share."

"I do not—I am not hungry." "That's no matter. Here!"

He forced upon her a bowl of hot broth, and she drank it down, and she could not resist his rough kindness.

"Good! Now a chunk of meat," he said. "Please, Mr. Blake," she protested.

"She took a bite and sought to eat, but there was such a lump in her throat that she could not swallow. The tears gushed into her eyes and she began to weep.

"Blake's close-set lips related and he said: 'That's it; let it run out. You're overwrought. There's nothing like a good cry to ease off a woman's nerves—and I guess that's much different from women when it comes to such things.'"

"I—I want to get the flag mended," she sobbed.

"All right, all right; plenty of time," he said, looking down at her. "You're looking down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff. You're looking down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff."

He belted down the last of his meat, and as once left her alone to cry herself to sleep, he turned away from the cliff to the signal.

His first concern was for the barricade. As he had feared, he found that the beach was a mass of mud and debris. He looked down the cliff to see how things look down the cliff.

He gathered up the sticks of the least sodden of the twigs and branches and spread them out on a ledge in the clear sunshine. While her firewood was drying, she scraped away the mud from her heated upon her rude hearth.

She began a search for lost articles. When she dug under the tree, she found her favorite steel pot, and one of the platters in fragments. The drying-frames for the meat had been blown away, and so had the little stove and hyena skins.

Catching sight of a bit of white down among the twigs, she picked it up and was not a little surprised to find the dried remains of her duck skirt. It had evidently been torn from the signal staff by the wind, and she had been down into the cleft by some flow or eddy in the wind, and wadded so tightly into the folds of the skirt that it had failed to dislodge it. Its recovery seemed to the girl a special providence, for of course she must keep up a signal on the cliff.

Having started her fire and set on a pot of water, she went on to the cave and began mending the slit in the torn flag. While she worked, she sat on a shaded ledge with her back to the sun and her feet warm and dry.

When Blake looked up and saw her, he was still where she had first put them, but the little pink feet were safely tucked beneath the tattered flag. Fortunately, the night of the cyclone had not worn Blake from noticing the moccasins.

"Hello," he exclaimed. "What's that—the flag?—the flag?"

"The flag," he explained. "Old St. Paul's carried clean away."

"Mr. Blake—just a moment, please. What have you done with the flag?"

Blake jerked his thumb upward. "You have carried him up on the cliff."

"Best place I could think of. No animals—and I piled some stones over. But I say, look here."

He drew out a piece of wadded cloth marked off into little squares by crossing lines of stitches. One of the squares near the edge had been ripped open. Blake thrust in his finger and worked out an emerald the size of a large pea.

"O-h-o-h," cried Miss Lake, as she held the glittering gem out to her in her right palm.

He drew it back and carefully thrust it again into the pocket.

"That's one," he said. "There's another in every square of this innocent, harmless rag—dozens of them. He must have made a clean sweep of the duke's—or, more like, the duchess's jewelry. Now, if you please, I want you to see this up tight."

"I cannot—I cannot touch it," she cried.

"Say, I didn't mean to. It was confounded stupid of me," mumbled Blake. "Don't you excuse me?"

"Of course. It was windy; the—the thought that—"

"No wonder. I always am a fool when it comes to ladies. I'll fix this thing all right."

Blake picked up the nearest small pot, he crammed the quilted cloth down within it and piled it to the brim with sticks.

"There! Guess nobody's going to run off with a jug of mud—and it won't hurt the stones if he gets a chance to look up the owner. He won't be hard to find—English duke minus a pint of first-class sparklers. Will you mind its setting in the cave after things are fixed?"

"No, not as it is. All right, then, now I'll go for the new flagstaff. You might set out breakfast."

She noticed in turn, and when he came back from the laundries with the largest of the great canes on